IslamWeb

All perfect praise be to Allaah, The Lord of the Worlds. I testify that there is none worthy of worship except Allaah, and that Muhammad is His slave and Messenger, may Allaah exalt his mention as well as that of his family and all his companions.

This material has been reviewed and forwarded for publishing and distribution by the English language department of IslamWeb.

All rights are reserved for the author except for free distribution, without any modification to any part of the book.

We would like to express our sincere appreciation to those who contributed to the publication of this book. May Allaah reward them abundantly for their efforts.

If you have other beneficial E-books or articles that you would like to have published on our site (without reserving copyrights); or if you have any corrections, comments, or questions about this publication, please feel free to contact us at: ewebmaster@islamweb.net

Computer Games

All praise is due to Allaah; the Lord of the universe; may He Allaah exalt the mention of Prophet Muhammad who was sent as a mercy for mankind, his family and all his companions.

Computer games have invaded the markets and are controlling the minds of our children and youth. They have brought with them new traditions, cultures and beliefs which totally oppose Islam. These devices differ according to their origin, but the biggest selling one in the Arab Gulf region is the 'Playstation'. Other popular ones are the 'Dreamcast', 'Nintendo 64' and many others.

There are new disks in their thousands which contain games for these devices. These devices and their corresponding games have become widespread and sell very quickly in our society due to many reasons. Among them are: weak and inadequate supervision by parents; the high technical quality of these devices; the captivating graphics, images and personalities found in the games and the excitement created by presentation of imaginary and virtual worlds. These devices have therefore become so popular that one can rarely find a home in which one or more of them are not present.

The size of the problem

No one can deny the importance of recreation and play in the life of our children and youth; children's activities mostly comprise of fun games, entertainment and playing, and this is how most of their energy is used up.

Before the invasion of computer games, playing was very beneficial for children physically, emotionally, educationally and for their nervous systems, but this invasion caused many changes, for although some of these games are useful in enhancing levels of thinking and developing intelligence, they are harmful to children in many other ways. They damage their faith, manners, physical health, emotional well being and negatively affect many other aspects of their lives.

Undoubtedly, the manufacturers of these devices have their own beliefs, cultures and concerns which are very different from Islam, as they are not Muslims and do not consider Islam as a religion which is worth paying any attention to. Moreover, they see that Muslims have reached the lowest levels of imitation and acceptance of other cultures, and that this is the reason why the Muslims do not consider Islamic regulations when purchasing their games and other amusement devices. In fact some organisations openly and deliberately mock Islam and the Muslims, and violate the sensitivities of Muslims, such as the Walt Disney Corporation, which is operated

with Jewish backing.

It is amazing how a Muslim who carries the Islamic creed, manners and education can accept with contentment everything that these companies produce. Whatever happened to the Islamic prohibitions of music, pornography and the resemblance of the opposite sex when it came to buying these devices?

Any father who purchases these games is oppressing his child, because these games contribute to the formation of the child's personality and character and develop them in line with the people of the country where these devices were invented, be it Japan, the United States any other non-Muslim country. These are countries whose civilisations were established with no weight given to morality or virtue. How can a father not ask himself what benefit his child will gain from these games or what harms they will bring? Why does he not ask himself if the benefits of such games outweigh the harm? Does any father actually preview and monitor these games to see what they contain before allowing his child to have free access to them?

A Story and an Admonition

A man went into a computer shop and said to the salesman: 'Please, give me a collection of games - I want you to choose the best for me because I am in a hurry!' Is this how we shoulder the responsibility of bringing up our children? Is this how we shape the personalities of our children - by relying on salesmen who may be ignorant of what is permitted and what is prohibited according to Islam? Are we to form our children's manners with the help of Jewish companies?

The dangers of these games lie in the control that they have over the minds of the youth and their way of thinking, and this causes them to live their lives far away from reality. The negative effects of these games continue well after a child finishes playing with it, for afterwards, he is always thinking of how to reach the last levels of the game and how to defeat his opponents, such as monsters, animals or evil men who come back to life whenever he kills them.

These games have far exceeded the level of innocent entertainment and reached that of addiction; many children waste numerous hours in front of their screens and monitors.

'They are still young'

There are some fathers who do realise the prohibitions which these games include, yet they take the matter lightly and still buy these games claiming that these children are still young and do not fully comprehend matters and that they are not held accountable for their actions by Allaah. Others say that the games contain images only which are not real and that their children are well aware of this

distinction so the games will not adversely affect them.

Such claims contain many mistakes:

Firstly: Thinking that children do not know anything is incorrect. Because, for example, when a child sees a picture of a woman, it remains in his memory and he will later start liking this picture. As time passes, this picture could well be the fuel which enflames his desires and lusts before their due time. Likewise, when he sees violence and killing, he becomes accustomed and more inclined towards it and this will be reflected in his dealings with his brothers and friends. The same can be said about the appearance of the characters in the games, such as their haircuts and clothes; the child will imitate these and delude himself into thinking that the more he imitates the characters in the games, the more distinct he will become and the more self confidence he will gain.

Secondly: The manufacturers of these devices have used the most sophisticated technology to make things appear as if they are real; they use three dimensional pictures which are exactly like real life images. Consequently, they have a profound effect on our children.

Thirdly: Teaching children noble morals and honourable manners and getting them accustomed to this starts from a very early age.

How can we instil such morals in our children if all they care about is defeating beasts and ghosts, looking at attractive young ladies, or wasting their lives in useless and imaginary competitions by playing these games?

How can our children memorise the Quran if their main interest is to play on their 'Playstation'? How will they learn the sayings of the Prophet sallallaahu 'alayhi wa sallam, Islamic jurisprudence, and Islamic history? When will they have time to read the Prophet's biography and learn how he fought Jihaad for the sake of propagating Islam? How can they be trained to perform the night prayers and other virtuous deeds if they spend most of their nights with these imaginary beasts and ghosts?

The evil effects of computer games

Effects on belief:

There are many prohibitions related to ones belief in these games which undoubtedly have a negative effect on our children's creed and will lead to many evils such as:

- Believing that there are super heroes who can do absolutely anything, such as in

the game 'Metal Gear Solid' which portrays the rescue of the universe to be dependent on 'Sneak', who is the star of the game.

• Loving the disbelievers and honouring them, which happens by developing love for some of the characters in these games who play the star role like, such as 'Amy', 'La La', 'Yooshi Mitcho' and others.

• Imitating the disbelievers, such as we see in the dress of many of the Muslim youth, for example, necklaces and wearing shorts in public. Also, many Muslim women resemble men due to them blindly imitating these characters.

• These games often include pictures of churches and contain the sound of church bells, and some characters in these games wear crosses. The evil effects of these are very clear; the least of them being that a Muslim would become accustomed to seeing these signs of disbelief without renouncing them.

• Transgressing the limits regarding the unseen. In some games, when a character dies, his spirit departs his body in the form of a transparent creature with coloured wings, which rises to the heavens, but Allaah says what means "And they ask you about the spirit, say the spirit is a matter the knowledge of which is only with my lord, and you have being given but little of knowledge." (Al-Israa': 85).

• Believing in luck, fortune tellers and magicians; such as in the game called 'The Bouncer' where the star called 'Dominic Cross' represents everybody's good fortune, and brings good luck and wealth to everybody the star meets.

Effects on religion:

• Numerous hours of time wasted in matters which bring no benefit; the players of these games waste long hours without feeling bored, while they could have utilised these hours by performing virtuous deeds.

• Missing obligatory prayers; these games are like magnets which attract our children. When the child thinks that praying will interrupt this joy, he will not stop playing in order to go and pray, so he will delay his prayers and this will eventually lead him to abandon his prayer completely.

• Disobedience to parents; a mother might feel sad seeing her child wasting long hours playing these games, so she may command him to stop playing and go and pray in the mosque or bring her something, but due to the strong attachment, the child might disobey her and therefore be undutiful to his parents, which is a great major sin.

Effects on manners:

These games have a very bad effect on the manners of those who play them such as:

• Cursing and bad-mouthing; such as in the game 'Quick 3 Arena' where players are allowed to curse each other by sending messages, as well as the use of some signs and icons which are morally unacceptable.

- Becoming accustomed to nudity; such as in the games 'Resident Evil', 'Quick 3 Arena' and 'Final Fantasy'. Other games have fighters wearing only swimsuits that expose their bodies, such as the game 'WWF'.

Dr. Afraaj Al-Humaydhi says: "Some computer games contain characters, especially women, with very revealing outfits. In some cases, these characters sing and dance to add to the excitement, despite the fact that the theme of the game does not require them to do so, such as in the Hercules/Action game. Other games have a background of girls wearing revealing swim suits, despite the fact that they have no relation to the game except that they make some moves during the game to draw attention to themselves, such as in the 'Alpha Street Fighter' game."

Some of these games have 3D images of almost nude girls who appear at the beginning of the game, during the recess or at the end. Teenagers will never feel burdened to watch these images and play these games, especially if the characters playing in it are nude women.

The insistence of having such images within the games is clear evidence that those who designed them are keen to destroy morality and lead teenagers towards following their base-desires and fulfilling them.

- Chasing after girls; this is instigated by having an extremely attractive and seductive girl as the main character, such as in the game 'Space Channel 5' for example.
- Female wrestling; In such games females wrestle with each other, or against men or monsters. In addition to the nudity in these games, these females make seductive moves which excite males in general and teenagers in particular.
- Becoming obsessed by music; one can rarely find a game which has no background music. There are games which were made for no other reason except to teach different types of music, such as the game 'Feb Robin' in which there is a rabbit that faces many difficulties; when soft music is played these difficulties reduce and when harsh music is played they increase - and the prohibition of music in Islam is clear.

Psychological effects: There are many obvious psychological problems which affect those who play these games:

- Nervousness which results from being continuously excited due to playing these games.
- Terrifying scenes which disturb the person playing psychologically, and might even give them nightmares; such as those games that take place in horrifying graves, as in the 'Final Fantasy 8' game.
- Sometimes these games result in increasing the feeling of isolation and loneliness

of the child, because when children used to play games other than computer games, there were many other children whom they had to co-operate and share things with, but once they discovered computer games, they began to sit alone in front of the screen or monitor for long hours without any need for others.

• Some games increase the child's sense of revenge and harming others, and lead him to shun mercy, tolerance and other noble Islamic morals.

Behavioural effects:

• Playing these games lead to the increase of violence from children because most of these games are based on fighting, killing and using force. There are some games which teach children how to fight and with the absence of the parental guidance, could have very dangerous effects on children's behaviour.

• The theme in some games are fictitious stories of destruction, such as the 'Get set ready' game in which the star of the game demolishes walls and buildings by using a coloured spray can. The star of the game is well aware of the fact that he is committing illegal acts, yet he continues. The message that this game gives to our children is that it is OK to destroy property, commit illegal acts and become an outlaw, and if you plot it well, nobody will catch you doing it.

• Some race games result in people doing what is known as 'crazy driving' which leads to road accidents.

Effects on health:

There is no doubt that sitting for long hours in front of monitors and screens, playing these games, have a very bad effect on health such as:

• Harmful radiation which weakens ones vision.
• Using up all the energy of the child such that he will be unable to do anything else afterwards.
• Causing a curve in the spinal cord.

Academic effects: Becoming addicted to these games lowers the educational ability of the child, because when he sits for long hours playing, he will not be able to advance in his studies as most of his energy was spent in front of the computer. Consequently, the child will have no time or energy to study, review his past lessons or prepare for forthcoming ones.

Financial effects: This is caused by wasting money buying the devices and games which are usually very expensive, and will eventually need maintenance due to the way children handle them. Some people do not settle for one device and a few games, but rather they purchase every new device that comes in the market, and this certainly helps the enemies of Islam by boosting their economies and strengthening

their financial capabilities, which are directed towards fighting our faith, manners and values.

Finally: This booklet is not intended to be a ruling which prohibits all types of computer games; in fact it is merely a call for us to become more rational in the way we deal with these games and a call to limit their usage. We must select only that which is useful and suitable and avoid any games which include things which are Islamically prohibited.